

Submission
No 191

**INQUIRY INTO PROPOSAL TO RAISE THE
WARRAGAMBA DAM WALL**

Name: Mrs Margaret Carmody

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OBJECTIONS TO RAISING THE WARRAGAMBA DAM WALL BY 14 METRES

I object to the proposal to raise the height of the Warragamba Dam by 14 metres.

My objection to the 'Raising the Dam' proposal comes from:

- **A:** Understanding the geography and topography of the lands below the Dam wall.
- **B:** Fundamental doubts about the cost then daily management of the stored waters if the height of the wall is raised.
- **C:** Particular concerns about the irreparable damage that will be caused to huge, visible areas and ancient cultural values on the World Heritage lands that surround Lake Burragorang.

Objection A: Publications by Water NSW explain that raising the height of the Dam wall will not (*and cannot*) completely 'flood proof' the Valley. The NSW Government and relevant Authorities cannot promote the physical situation in two directions - 'flood mitigation' on flood prone lands does not equal '**flood proofing**' of those low lying areas, particularly where the mighty and untameable Hawkesbury River is concerned.

Lobby groups of land holders, developers, speculators and some groups in Government can promote their interests, but they cannot permanently alter or reverse the natural order in the total environment that continually and randomly affects the Hawkesbury Valley.

Objection B: The Warragamba Dam is now an 'old' structure which has already been raised and strengthened and now protected by the new spillway to withstand all anticipated future, major flood events. So far, only the most basic diagrams of the new and proposed engineering works have been shown but it is obvious that all of the present design considerations on the Dam will have to be raised and/or duplicated to achieve the same level of safety and operational conditions. Considering the height and span of the dam wall across the valley, this will be a monumental and expensive exercise and I am definitely not satisfied with the preliminary, published estimates of the cost.

Further concerns are that the new higher structure will actually be used to increase the volume of the stored water for whatever future good reason is given – increasing the permanent damage to the shores around Lake Burragorang. This extensive and complete desecration will occur even if the extra storage is for only a few weeks (as stated) - because of siltation across the affected areas.

Objection C: Raising the height of the Dam wall by 14 metres will cause ponding of all future flood waters that come down the huge river system to drop the silt, sand and debris, particularly on the more gentle land contours above the Warragamba Gorge.

If this material is deposited over the bushland, the detrimental effects are permanent, irreversible and will be highly visible within the GBMWhA. Devastation to be clearly seen by tourists visiting the few remote lookouts and a few Bushwalkers moving around the high cliffs, but painfully obvious to every passenger and aeroplane that will use the (future) Badgerys Creek Airport - and not a pleasant sight or good advertisement for NSW at our new, international 'front door'.

My objection is that raising the height of the dam wall will permanently damage the GBMWHA to the extent that the 'World Heritage Status' for the Blue Mountains may be withdrawn by the United Nations Committee. Other international locations have been down-graded for fewer reasons.

Other Options: Associate Professor Jamie Pittock from the ANU has made the excellent suggestion that the final solution for the total environment and Hawkesbury Valley is to return the Hawkesbury Basin to a 'more vibrant agricultural sector'. The costs would be far less than the current engineering proposal at Warragamba, all the environments (including the GBMWHA) above and below the Dam would be protected and local (cheap) food production could continue. Obviously, the scheme would take time and careful management to implement but has merit from all directions – provided future rates, statutory charges and regulations are always in tune with this use for a unique, historical, geographical area.

Several other engineering solutions by respected professional bodies are already on the table, but seem to have been summarily dismissed by Water NSW and/or Government Ministers.

However, these alternative ideas, accurate costs and a benefit analysis *must* now be examined within an open public forum.